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TO: V. J. St. Pierre, Parish President

FROM: Joan Diaz, Director of Community Services

SUBJECT: 2010 Annual Report

Executive Summary

The Department of Community Services is committed to the development and delivery of quality programs and supportive services to low income and struggling families and individuals throughout St. Charles Parish through a comprehensive service delivery system that protects the dignity and potential of every person.

In collaboration with our community partners we provide programs and services that serve as a safety net for struggling families throughout St. Charles Parish as we respond to the needs of residents to alleviate pain and suffering, improve the quality of life, to offer options for change, and to break the cycle of poverty.

Our mission is rooted in service to the community and is characterized by programs and services that are responsive to the needs identified through a comprehensive intake and assessment process.

As a Community Action agency the Department of Community Services works through a partnership with the Louisiana Association of Community Action Programs (LACAP) to provide social services that focus on :

- Assistance to the poor and vulnerable populations in our community
- Self-development opportunities
- Housing improvements
- Educational and social services support

To accomplish these goals, the department has implemented the following initiatives during the 2010 fiscal year:

Intake Process

In an effort to improve the effectiveness of the social service delivery system, the Department of Community Services implemented a **comprehensive intake and assessment process** to identify the needs in the community and the department's response. In addition, the data collected through the intake process helps to identify gaps in services and establish priorities for future planning.

Beginning in September 2010, the department developed a system for **centralized intake** whereby all clients participate in a basic service assessment. Data tracked includes:

- Calls logged by service request
- Onsite Service requests
- Demographic data on client
- Type of assistance requested
- Number of appointments by service area and staff
- Level and type of assistance provided
- Number and type of referrals made
- Documentation of unmet needs
- Tracking by neighborhood

Community Partnerships

In an effort to expand our capacity to respond to the needs of clients, the department began cultivating partnerships with other community based organizations in order to develop a coordinated service delivery system. This includes the development or expansion of partnerships with local, state and national nonprofit and public service organizations to include the following:

- Volunteers of America to build ramps for elderly and disabled residents
- Processing of the Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LA Chip)
- Weatherization education for clients with support from Entergy
- Shared resources and referral of clients to the St. Anthony Center
- Working in partnership with the St. Charles Parish Housing Authority to secure affordable housing for homeless clients.
- Working with Second Harvest to provide snacks to youth in the St. Rose Community Center after school program.

St. Rose Community Center

In addition, the department worked with Boys Town Louisiana to develop specialized programs for youth and parents at the St. Rose Community Center by providing **skill building** Workshops to clients:

- In September we launched the nationally acclaimed Boys Town **Common Sense Parenting** series utilizing ARRA client education funds.
- Two teen forums titled ***"Live beyond the Influence"*** that focused on abstinence/character education were facilitated by Boys Town in September and October.

In an effort to provide a safe haven and supportive services to residents of the Preston Hollow subdivision and surrounding area, the department modified the St. Rose Community Center activities to include:

- **Flex hours** during the school year allowed us to meet the needs of youth in the community from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00p.m. utilizing a *drop in center* model. Activities include homework help, snacks, specialized programs, supervised free play and structured activities.
- The department developed a monthly calendar of activities appealing to a variety of clients that included:
 - Computer skills classes and access to the computer lab
 - **GED Prep** course to assist high school drop outs with the basic skills to prepare them to enter into a GED program
 - Fall gardening/literacy program
 - Specialized program in partnership with the local library
 - Seasonal crafts
 - Holiday Cooking with youth to include pizza making, fudge and holiday desserts.

Emergency Assistance

As a safety net for struggling families, the department provides emergency assistance with utility bills, rent/mortgage, food and medicine and emergency shelter to qualified low income families and elderly residents.

- The department received additional emergency funding for 2010 through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) enabling us to provide support to low income families and individual through rent/mortgage assistance, help with utility bills and funds for child care and education.
- Thanksgiving letters were sent out to all departments and businesses throughout the parish soliciting donations for our annual food basket drive. Over 150 baskets and turkeys were distributed through this effort.

H.O.M.E Program

HUD program is designed to assist low income and elderly homeowners with home repairs. Applicants must be qualified under HUD guidelines. The department worked through a consortium with Jefferson Parish to improve the approval process in order to expedite applications for home repairs under this funding stream.

Emergency Home Repair Program

Program provides support for emergency home repairs for elderly, low income and single head of household. Repairs are limited to \$5,000. The department worked to supplement this program through the use of volunteers and to secure future matching funds from private partners.

Weatherization Program

The department provides minor energy conservation repairs provided to low income families. This can include air sealing, weather stripping, attic insulation etc. Income and participation guidelines are established by federal and state funding agencies. 2010 allocation was funded through a special ARRA weatherization grant.

2010 Major Accomplishments

During 2010, the Department of Community Services continued to provide innovative programs and assistance that compassionately served low-income, elderly, handicapped, and other disadvantaged residents of St. Charles Parish. With the funding sources of Community Services Block Grant, Department of Education, Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program, Department of the Treasury, Atmos Energy, Louisiana Association of Community Action Partnership, Inc., Louisiana Housing Agency Finance Department, HUD, Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana, Job1 of New Orleans and St. Charles Parish Council, the department's 2010 budget was a total one million, six hundred and ninety-one thousand, three hundred and ninety-two dollars (\$1,691,392.00). These funds were used to provide the following services; Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (*LIHEAP*), Emergency Assistance Program (*EAP*), Emergency Food and Shelter Program (*EFSP*), Summer Food Service Program (*SFSP*), H.O.M.E. Program (*HP*), Weatherization Assistance Program (*WAP*), Medicaid Program (*MP*), Health & Safety Rehabilitation (*HSR*), St. Rose Community Center, and Information & Referral Services (*I&R*). A brief description and summary of the services provided for each program is shown below.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP): During 2010, 3,087 low-income residents were directly impacted with energy assistance. DCS processed one thousand, two hundred seventy-seven (1,277) applications and disbursed LIHEAP grant funds to provide utility assistance totaling \$493,577.94. These payments were made directly to the utility company as a credit to the client's account.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP): Parish funds were leveraged to assist residents experiencing an emergency financial crisis. Fifty-seven (57) applications were favorably processed. Seven (7) applications were processed for food assistance, three (3) applications were processed for clothing assistance for fire victims, ten (10) applications for medication, five (5) housing applications for rent or shelter assistance and thirty-two (32) utilities applications for gas or electric were process. Total assistance provided was \$9,054.49.

PROJECT RECOVERY-ARRA ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: During 2010, 3,087 low-income residents were directly impacted with energy assistance. DCS processed three hundred forty-three (343) applications and disbursed ARRA grant funds to provide utility, rent and mortgage, education and childcare assistance totaling \$184,408.00. These payments were made directly to the utility companies, landlords, mortgage companies, colleges/technical schools, and applied to the client's account.

GULF COAST \$ ENERGY SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM: This program is funded through Louisiana Housing Finance Agency of Baton Rouge. Applications are only processed in the Department of Community Services Office and faxed to LHFA for approval and payment. A total of thirty-one (34) applications were processed impacting 72 residents of St. Charles Parish. Due to the lack of funds at that particular time only one (1) application was approved for payment, totaling \$505.48.

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP): The Summer Food Service Program for 2010 was held from June 7 thru July 15, 2010. Reimbursement of six thousand, seven hundred and five (8,705) meals were received from the state. Meals were served to handicapped children over 18 enrolled in an accredited state program as well as all children under the age of 18 residing in the parish. Lunch was served at two (2) sites on the west bank and one (1) site on the east bank. Twenty two thousand, seven-hundred and three dollars and ninety cents (\$22,703.90) was reimbursed to the St. Charles Parish School Board for bus and facility rentals, and utilities. Seven thousand six hundred forty-six dollars and forty cents (\$7,646.40) of this total was paid for utilities, fourteen thousand three-hundred and eighty-seven dollars (\$14,387.00) for bus and other property and rental fees, and an additional six hundred seventy dollars and fifty cents (\$670.50) – 10¢ of each meal served – was paid to the school board. These expenses plus the cost of food, supplies and salaries minus the advance pay from the Department of Education resulted in the total program expense of fifty-three thousand, nine hundred and seventy-seven dollars and six cents (\$53,977.06). Volunteers, parish summer staff and WIA summer staff provided the supervision for the participants, keeping the cost to implement the program lower for the year 2010.

H.O.M.E. PROGRAM (HP): Fifty-one (51) applicants were screened for the program and after meeting the income requirements, 24 of the 51 homes were assessed for feasibility. Of the 24 screened for feasibility, only 14 have been determined program eligible. In 2009, seven (7) houses were rehabilitated and made safer and healthier with funds from the H.O.M.E. program. Fourteen (14) residents were impacted by these services and their homes were made safer and healthier. A total of \$259,960.82 in grant funds were expended. Of the expenditures, \$9,750 was used to secure data that assisted the Housing Inspector in providing reports and information (i.e. presence of lead) to homeowners and aided in the contract bidding process. The St. Charles Parish Finance Department will be reimbursed funds through the Consortium.

HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM (HRP): The regulations for this program were set by HUD and implemented by Jefferson Parish Community Development. Three (3) projects were completed in 2010 with an additional seven (7) houses qualifying for this program. With the new regulations requiring a complete historic and environmental review on all projects only one (1) house was completed. A total of \$29,239.82 was spent on this project and impacted 3 people of the parish. Of the six (6) remaining houses two (2) tested positive for lead, which has to be removed and retested before regular rehabilitation can proceed.

The breakdown in expenditures for 2010 consisted of one (1) project - \$24,839.82, lead inspections/risk assessments - \$4,400.00, A. R. E. Real Estate Appraisals - \$ 2,150.00, Housing Inspections - \$19,580.00, Retainages for 3 other projects completed in 2010 - \$11,758.89 and a yearly Lead Refresher's Courses - \$550.00. A grand total of \$63,278.71 was spent for 2010 Housing Rehabilitation funds.

REPAIRS ON WHEELS (ROW): Thanks to the United Way Agency of Luling, a \$25,000 grant was awarded to the Volunteers of America of Greater New Orleans. Volunteers of America of Greater New Orleans have a program called Repairs on Wheels in which they service the citizens of St. Charles Parish.

In 2010 eighteen (18) homeowners needs were surveyed and applications left with them for assistance. Of the 18 homeowners 6 qualified for a handicap ramp impacting 9 people in the parish. These ramps have been completed and funding is exhausted. VOA takes care of all expenditures through agency.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM (H&SP): Twelve (12) households were assisted through these funds. One (1) roof was replaced on a mobile home with the help of a volunteer, material cost \$3,301.0, three (3) AC Units were replaced, cost \$8,000, Volunteer of America built two (2) ramps for a total of \$6,352.73, insulation blown under a mobile home by Apex Insulation for \$1,865, one (1) exterior door replaced for a total of \$540 and one (1) inspection for a cost of \$300. The grand total of expenditures in 2010 was \$20,359.63

WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (WAP): After reviewing 25 applications, all twenty-five (25) homes were WAP eligible and were weatherized during 2010. Project Recovery ARRA Weatherization Program funds were used to fund these projects. Energy saving materials such as blow-in cellulose insulation, weather-stripping, caulking, door sweeps, ridge vents, window and door insulation materials, as well as services to the a/c units and hot water heaters were provided. Total expenditures requested were \$146,282.13, with an estimated reimbursement balance of \$21,973.92 to be received for houses completed late December.

MEDICAID PROGRAM: One (1) unit of service was provided totaling a \$14.00 reimbursement to the parish. This service provides assistance to applicants who may possibly qualify for Medicaid or LACHIP. This process only provides assistance by completing applications. Because Medicaid applications are also taken at the St. Charles Parish Health Unit, St. Charles Hospital and other agencies in the parish, there continues to be a reduction in the number of applications processed through our department.

YOUTH KREWE PROGRAM: The Youth KREWE (disconnected youth ages 17-24) participated in numerous community revitalization efforts and programs. The final date of participation was April 29, 2010. The participant's final project was to assist with the cleanup of the exterior of the St. Rose Community Center. Krewe members also assisted in the beautification and landscaping of the front of Presto Hollow and Dianne Place subdivisions. Program ended

ST. ROSE COMMUNITY CENTER: Educational, recreational, and community-oriented services were provided through the center throughout 2010. Major programs and projects included Black History and Summer Food Services Program, neighborhood beautification projects, recycling, and Toys-for-Tots. Weekly and seasonal services included art, reading, computer classes for seniors, and Freeze-Pop Fridays. Parenting workshops facilitated by Boys Town of New Orleans, focused on the healthy development of children, were well attended throughout the seven week course. Over seventy-five volunteer hours were provided at the center by local residents of the east and west bank communities.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT PROGRAM (EITC): During 2010, 11 low-income residents were directly impacted with Earned Income Tax Credit Program impacting 21 persons in the parish.

THANKSGIVING BASKETS: Seven (7) businesses', one (1) church and fifteen (15) employees' gave contributions toward of Thanksgiving drive donations. Donations were made in the form of checks, cash, gift cards, and turkeys. A total of \$1,050.00 was collected to purchase food for this activity. Dow Chemical gave an additional 25 baskets for distribution. A total of one hundred sixty-one (161) baskets were served to residents of St. Charles Parish.

TOY GIVE AWAY: A toy give away was held at Tipitina's for organizations desiring to distribute toy to needed families. The Department of Community Services received a truck load of toys for distribution. Also, Occidental Chemical gave our department food to supply of pantry. Approximately 50 families received toys and a small bag of food during the Christmas Holiday.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES (I&R): Brokering and linking clients to other services is a great majority of the case management service offered in the department. Therefore, when the applicant or client was either ineligible for any of the services and /or where additional assistance was needed, referrals were made. DCS provided over one thousand, three hundred eighty-seven (1,387) referrals impacting the lives of two thousand, two hundred twenty-five residents (2,225). Referrals were made to other social service agencies within and outside of the parish, including: Social Concerns, Office of Family Services, St. Charles Health Unit, Red Cross, Council on Aging, Social Security, Veterans Administration as well as churches, and other various parish offices.